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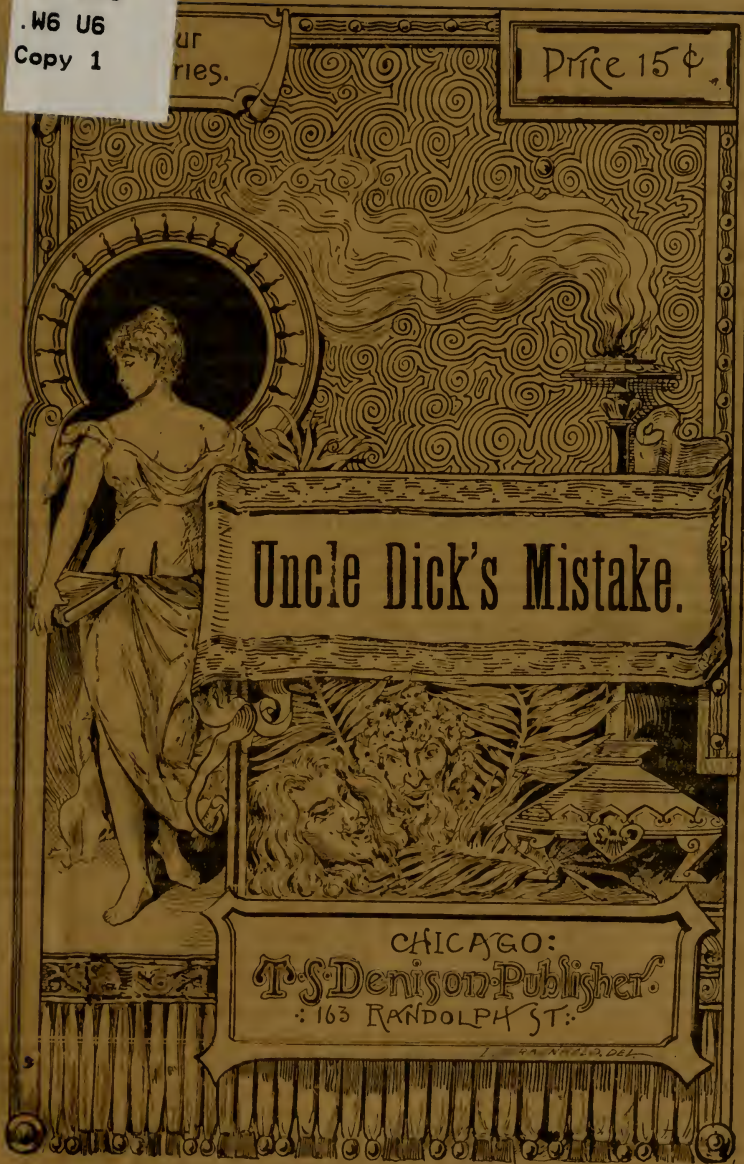

Uncle Dick's Mistake.

CHICAGO:
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UNCLE DICK'S MISTAKE.

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CHARACTERS.

RICHARD COVINGTON, a New York broker.
CLARENCE COVINGTON, his nephew,
MRS. LIVINGSTON, a charming young widow.
LOTTIE LIVINGSTON, her niece.
SAMMY, hopeful son of Mrs. L.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc., 1 *E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance, etc.; *D F.*, door in flat or back of the stage; 1 *G.*, first groove, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience

COSTUMES.

RICHARD COVINGTON.—Dark swallow-tailed coat, standing collar, black silk scarf, buff vest, drab pants, gold-headed cane, eye-glass.

MRS. LIVINGSTON.—Neat, dark summer costume.

LOTTIE. - Pretty white muslin dress, with roses in her hair.

CLARENCE.—Stylish light summer suit, straw hat, small rattan cane.

SAMMY.—Knickerbocker suit.

Time of performance, forty minutes.

NOTE.—Though this play is furnished with full directions for the stage, it may be played in any ordinary room.

UNCLE DICK'S MISTAKE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—Well furnished sitting-room of a summer boarding house in the country. Small center table, L. C., back; sofa, R. C., back; chairs, R. and L.

Enter Uncle Dick, R. 2 E., hat and cane in hand.

Uncle D. So this is the place where that hopeful young nephew of mine is idling away his time, is it? Humph! It's perfectly scandalous for a young, able-bodied man to be dilly-dallying around in this manner. He ought to have been brought up on a farm, as I was. I never had any play spells. My midsummer vacations were spent planting wheat, or sowing potatoes, or digging corn, or something of that sort. That young man has got to begin to do something. He's got to go to work. He seems to entertain the idea that I am the United States mint, and all he's got to do when he wants money is to turn the crank. But I'll shut down on him. I'll not stand it. I'll make a note of that. (*Produces note book and pencil, and makes entry.*).

Enter Sammy, L. 2 E., whistling. Stops short on seeing Uncle Dick, who does not at first observe him. As Uncle Dick continues to talk and inspect the room, Sammy mimics him, looking through an imaginary eye-glass, etc.

Uncle D. (*Looking around the room, inspecting things with his eye-glass.*) This is a fine place, I must say, for a man to come to in search of recreation. I'll recreate the young man when I get him back in the office.

Uncle Dick and Sammy, who have been turning and looking around, run into each other, and Uncle D. starts back astonished.

Uncle D. (*Staring at Sammy through his eye-glass.*) Might I be permitted to inquire what particular part of this establishment you represent?

Sammy. Heh?

Uncle D. Are you one of the regular attractions of this institution, or —or what?

Sammy. Oh, talk United States.

Uncle D. Well, then, who owns you?

Sammy. Oh, I'm me mother's daw-ling.

Uncle D. Ah, yes; I was quite confident that you was somebody's

darling. You bear the usual ear-marks of a pet You must be a very great comfort to your mother.

Sammy. You bet. She couldn't git 'long 'thout me, nohow.

Uncle D. I should suppose it would be very difficult. By the way, my diffident young friend, can you inform me where I'll be likely to find a young man by the name of Clarence Covington?

Sammy. You mean the feller that's in love with my Cousin Lottie?

Uncle D. Oh, yes; I presume so. If she's a woman under 40, and he's seen her, he's in love with her. Do you know where the young man is?

Sammy. Gimme a nickel, an' I'll tell you all I know about him.

Uncle D. You've evidently been associating with him. (*Gives money.*) There's your wages. (*Makes entry in note book, speaking aloud as he writes.*) For bribing mother's darling, five cents. Now, then, what about my interesting young nephew?

Sammy. (*Going R.*) Oh, I don't know. I ain't seen him for two or three days. (*Exit R. 2 E.*)

Uncle D. (*Stares after Sammy through eye-glass; then takes out note book and makes entry.*) Received payment

Enter Clarence L. 1 E.

Clarence. Hello—if here isn't Uncle Dick. Why, where in the world did you drop from?

Uncle D. Oh, I fell from New York.

Clar. Well, it seems odd to see you anywhere outside of that dingy old office of yours. But I'm awfully glad to see you just the same.

Uncle D. Humph! You're out of money again, are you?

Clar. Oh, no; I'm all right on that score.

Uncle D. That's the most remarkable circumstance I've heard of in years. I'll make a note of it. (*Does so.*)

Clar. You don't suppose that I look upon you simply as my banker, do you, uncle?

Uncle D. Oh, no; not as an ordinary banker. You seem to regard me more as a kind of a United States sub treasury, or something of that nature.

Clar. Well, there's no sordid motive at the bottom of my welcome in this case, at any rate. I've been wishing you were here for some time. I want you to meet some new friends of mine.

Uncle D. If they're as expensive as the most of your friends have been, I don't care to indulge, thank you

Clar. Oh they're not at all expensive. You see, I came here instead of going to the hotel down the lake yonder, just on account of the expense. I get a very fair room here, with only two other persons in it for twenty dollars a week So you see I really am economizing this time.

Uncle D. Yes, I see. There's no doubt whatever that nature intended you for a financier. But these friends of yours—are they business men, or what?

Clar. N—no; not precisely. The fact is, they are not exactly men at all. They're ladies.

Uncle D. Ah, yes; I see. It's quite natural that they shouldn't be exactly men, then.

Clar. Certainly. And they're the most charming ladies in the world, too. One of them is Miss Lottie Livingston, and the other is Mrs. Livingston, a fascinating young widow and Lottie's aunt. They come from very old families. Lottie's grandfather was—

Uncle D. (*Interrupting.*) Never mind their pedigrees. People with ancestors usually have very little else to be proud of.

Clar. That's not the case in this instance, at any rate. Miss Lottie is the brightest, dearest, sweetest, most bewitching, handsomest—

Uncle D. Yes, yes, yes; I have heard 'em described frequently. What about it?

Clar. Why, I'm in love with her, uncle. I fell in love with her the first thing.

Uncle D I dare say you did. You'll be catching the yellow fever or small pox some of these times, if you don't use a little more caution.

Clar. Oh, you'll not blame me, Uncle Dick, when you come to see her. But you never can have any idea how I do love that girl.

Uncle D. Nonsense, young man. I know all about it. I've been through the mill repeatedly.

Clar. Do you mean to say, uncle, that you ever really and earnestly loved a girl?

Uncle D. Why, certainly. More than fifty of 'em.

Clar. But you were never married were you?

Uncle D. (*Considering.*) N—no, I—I believe not. (*Looks through note book.*) No, I was never married. I should have made a note of it if I had have been.

Clar. Why don't you get married, Uncle Dick?

Uncle D. Why—really—the—the idea hadn't occurred to me.

Clar. Well, it occurs to you now, at any rate. You're rich, and could certainly afford it; and I'm sure you'd find it a great deal more agreeable than living as you do now. Besides, it would probably be cheaper in the end.

Uncle D. (*Reflectively.*) Do you—do you think so?

Clar I haven't the slightest doubt of it. If I were you, I wouldn't hesitate an instant. I'd get married at once.

Uncle D. (*After a pause spent in considering the subject*) Well, I will. I'll make a note of it. (*Writes in note book, repeating aloud, as usual.*) Get married. Now, I'm a man of business, and time is money. I'll attend to this little matter first, and then we'll look after our other affairs.

Clar. Why, you don't mean to say that you're going to be married right off—now—instantly?

Uncle D. Why, certainly. To be sure. When I make up my mind to do a thing, I do it. I'm not one of your procrastinating kind.

Clar. But what about the lady? You can't be married without first finding a wife, you know.

Uncle D. (*Considering.*) Humph! That hadn't occurred to me. Do you—do you consider it really essential?

Clar. (*Laughing.*) Oh, yes; it's quite essential. You'll have to find a wife the first thing.

Uncle D. I'll make a note of it then (*Does so.*) Find wife. Now, then, where can I procure such an article?

Clar. Why, really, I hardly know about that.

Uncle D. Why, what do you mean, young man? You suggest that I get married, and insist that a lady is an absolute necessity; and now you don't know where she's to come from. If you've got a marriageable female at your disposal, produce her. If you haven't, don't talk matrimony to me.

Clar. I've struck it, uncle. Lottie's aunt. It would be a famous match.

Uncle D. Very well, then. Trot her out.

Clar. Oh, but you're rushing things a little too fast. You must be presented in regular shape, and make an orthodox proposal.

Uncle D. It seems to me there are a good many preliminaries to go through in this business. However, (*looks at watch*) if I can get back to town by that 4:20 train, it'll do. Go ahead with your exercises.

Clar. By the way, uncle, I wish you'd do me a little favor.

Uncle D. I'm sorry, but I left my check book at home.

Clar. Oh, it's not that. I told you that I was in love with Lottie Livingston, but I haven't found the courage yet to tell her so, and I don't know whether she cares two straws for me or not. Now, making a proposal for a lady's hand seems to be such a matter of fact business with you, I wish you could talk with Lottie for me.

Uncle D. Talk with her yourself, why don't you?

Clar. I can't do it. I've tried to a hundred times; but my heart always comes up into my mouth, and I can't say a word.

Uncle D. Well, my heart is not in the habit of making any such excursions as that. I'll talk to the young lady. By the way, what would you be likely to say to her, provided your heart remained down in your stomach, where it belongs?

Clar. Oh, I should tell her how I have loved her devotedly and passionately for months. How my love has grown from day to day, until it absorbs every fiber of my being. How I live in the sunshine of her smiles, and am wretched and miserable when absent from her side. And—oh, a great many other things like that.

Uncle D. (*Who has been taking notes.*) I should say that would be sufficient. I just want a hint or two. It has been years since I was in the habit of proposing to people. Now, then, if you'll just send in the candidates, I'll get to work at once.

Clar. (*Looking out, R.*) Ah, there they come, now. (*Pointing.*) They're just crossing the lawn yonder.

Enter Sammy, unperceived, L. 3 E. He listens.

Clar. The one with the white hat is Miss Lottie; the one with the black hat Mrs. Livingston.

Uncle D (*Making entry in note book.*) White hat for Clarence; black hat for myself. All right. I'll tackle them at once. I hope the widow will be ready to be married in time for me to catch that 4:20 train.

Sammy. Oh, she'll be ready all right. She's been ready for more'n two years.

Uncle D. and Clarence turn hastily, and Sammy scoots out L. 3 E. grinning.

Clar. That little terror must have heard what we said. We'll have to hunt him up, and bribe him, or he'll give the whole scheme away.

Uncle D. If that young man don't grow up to be an alderman, he'll miss his vocation. It would bankrupt a millionaire to live in the same house with him long. Go on. We'll have to head him off, I suppose.

Exit Clarence and Uncle D. L. 3 E.

Enter Mrs. Livingston and Lottie, R. 2 E.

Mrs. L. This uncle of Mr. Covington's, who has just arrived, is a bachelor, is he not, Lottie?

Lottie. Yes; and the oddest, most eccentric one that ever lived, I suppose. They say that he is so completely wrapped up in his business that he carries it with him wherever he goes. He insists on having everything down in black and white, and when anything is said or done, or thought of, he makes a note of it on the spot.

Mrs. L. But he is rich, isn't he?

Lottie. Oh, yes; so they say. He must be a millionaire, at least; and perhaps a billionaire.

Mrs. L. Ah, well, he has a right to be eccentric, then. We must manage to cultivate his acquaintance at once.

Enter Sammy, L. 2 E.

Sammy. (*In a whining tone.*) Say, ma.

Mrs. L. Well, darling; what is it?

Sammy. I want to go and play in a mud-puddle.

Mrs. L. Oh, mamma couldn't let you do that, precious. You'd catch an awful cold, and the doctor would have to come and give you a whole lot of nasty medicine.

Sammy. (*Complainingly.*) You don't never let me do nothin'.

Mrs. L. (*Coaxingly.*) Oh, now; mamma's pet mustn't say that. I'll let you do anything in the world that—

Sammy. (*Interrupting.*) Say, ma.

Mrs. L. Well, sweet.

Sammy. Why don't you have a white hat, just like Cousin Lottie's?

Mrs. L. Why, I don't know, dear. Would you like to have mamma have a hat like Cousin Lottie's?

Sammy. Yes; I want you to trade hats with her, so's you'll look nice, the way she does.

Mrs. L. (*To Lottie.*) The dear child has such remarkable taste; it's really wonderful. We'll have to please him, of course. (*Hands her own hat to Lottie, receiving Lottie's in return, and placing same on her head.*) There, pet; does that suit you?

Sammy. Yes. Say, ma.

Mrs. L. Well darling. What is it?

Sammy. I want you to take me down to see the boats.

Mrs. L. Well, you shall go and see the boats; you haven't seen them since dinner. Come on, darling. We'll be back soon, Lottie, dear

Exit Mrs. L. and Sammy, L. 2 E.

Lottie. I wonder if this uncle of Mr. Covington's is as backward about

asking for what he wants as he is himself. Here I've been flirting, and dancing, and boat riding, and picnicking with him for the last two months, and although I'm sure he has just been on the point of proposing a dozen times, his courage has always failed at the last moment (*Impatiently.*) Oh, why don't the men have a little more spunk, I wonder? Well, he needn't expect me to help him out any. I cannot control my heart; but if he ever gets my hand he will have to ask for it. (*Looking out L.*) As I live, that queer uncle is coming this way. (*She lets her hat fall behind her back, where it hangs by its strings.*)

Enter Uncle Dick, L. 2 E.

Uncle D. (*Bowing to Lottie.*) Servant, ma'am (*Looks sharply at her head, and glances round the room, on table, etc., as if looking for her hat, while he speaks.*) Ah—fine weather, ma'am. Warm for the season. (*Looks in note book, then around again.*) Ah yes; to be sure; it does look like rain, as you say. (*Examines note book again, reading, aside.*) White hat for Clarence, black hat for myself. Humph! nothing said here about a bare-headed one, that I can see. (*To Lottie.*) Beg pardon, ma'am, but is your name Livingston?

Lottie. (*Bowing.*) That is my name, sir

Uncle D. Ah, yes; to be sure. You're the—the other one, I presume. That is—(*catches a glimpse of the hat hanging on her back—aside.*) Hello; she's got a hat of some kind there behind her. (*Tries to look around her, rises on tiptoe to look over her, etc., while he is talking.*) Yes I've—that is, you have—I mean, we've both - er—you have heard of me, perhaps. My name is Covington—Richard Covington, broker, Wall street. By the way, ma'am who lives in that white house over yonder (*pointing R., behind Lottie*) the one right behind you, there.

Lottie. (*Without turning.*) That is Mr. Brown's place. (*Aside.*) Well, he is an odd genius, to be sure.

Uncle D. (*Still pointing and motioning her to turn and look.*) Well, is that Mr. Brown just coming out of the gate?

Lottie. (*Without looking.*) Oh, no; Mr. Brown went to New York this morning.

Uncle D. (*Aside.*) Confound the woman, any way. (*To Lottie.*) Beg pardon, but can you tell me who that lady is that's just passing? (*Pointing in same direction.*)

Lottie turns to look.

Uncle D. (*Sees hat—aside.*) Black, by Jove. Let's see. (*Examines note book.*) White hat, Clarence; black hat, myself. That's my property, sure.

Lottie. (*Turning to him.*) You must be mistaken, sir. There is no lady passing, that I can see.

Uncle D. Ah—no; she just went around the corner. By the way, ma'am, I have a little business with you, if you will favor me with your attention for a short time.

Lottie. (*Surprised.*) Business with me, sir?

Uncle D. Yes; but don't be alarmed, now; it's nothing of importance, I assure you. (*Looks in note book.*) The fact is, I—ah, yes; here it is.

My dear madam, I have loved you devotedly and passionately for months. My love has grown from day to day, until it absorbs every fiber of my being. I live in the sunshine of your smiles, and am wretched and miserable when absent from your side. And—and—well, that appears to be the whole case. Oh, yes; to be sure; here's another item. Get married. My dear madam, the aforesaid are my sentiments. Now, then, will you become the wife of Richard Covington? That's me, you understand—broker, Wall street, also real estate and insurance.

Lottie. You astonish me, Mr. Covington. It's absurd for you to say you have loved me for months, when I am certain you never even saw me until you entered this room.

Uncle D. Certainly, madam. I agree with you entirely. Matters of this kind usually are very absurd. I never saw any sense in them, myself.

Lottie. You are frank, at all events. If you are wretched and miserable when absent from my side, your whole life heretofore must have been a very unhappy one.

Uncle D. (*Producing handkerchief.*) Oh, it has—it has. I never realized before how miserable I have been.

Lottie. Since you can only live in the sunshine of my smiles, I wonder that you have managed to exist at all

Uncle D. (*Plaintively.*) It has been very hard. I've been on the point of giving up the struggle several times.

Lottie. Poor man. And now you want me to marry you, so that your future life will be a path of roses, I suppose?

Uncle D. Yes—that's it; path of roses; and so I can catch that 4:20 train.

Lottie. And if I refuse, your heart will break, I suppose?

Uncle D. Oh, yes; there's no doubt of it. It always does.

Lottie. May I ask, sir, if your nephew is aware that you propose to confer this exalted honor upon me?

Uncle D. Clarence? Oh, yes. I never should have thought of it if it hadn't been for him.

Lottie. (*Indignantly.*) Then please tell him that I fully appreciate his kindness in interfering with my affairs, aad that I am humbly grateful to him for trying to find me a husband.

Uncle D. Oh, you're entirely welcome, I assure you. There's nothing small about Clarence.

Lottie. So I perceive. As for your broken heart, sir, you will have to bestow it upon some one else. I shall never engage myself to a man until I have known him at least half an hour.

Exit Lottie, R. 2 E.

Uncle D. (*Gazes after her through his eye-glass until she has disappeared, then takes out note book and makes entry.*) Re-jected. Now that all comes from talking about misery, and broken hearts, and love, and wretchedness, and things of that nature. When I propose to people hereafter I'll not take the advice of any young sprig. I'll go about the business in my own way.

Sammy enters L. U. E., hands in pocket. He strolls across back of stage, gazing at ceiling, walls, and everywhere except in Uncle Dick's direction, singing softly to himself:

'Tis a maxim you should heed,
Try, try again;
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again.

Uncle D. Look here, young man.

Sammy comes down and stands R. C.; Uncle D. L. C.

Uncle D. You ought to try and get over that extreme modesty and diffidence of yours. You really should cultivate a little confidence and self-assurance. It will be hard, I know, but you ought to do it.

Sammy. (*Draws a large ledger and carpenter's pencil from under his coat.*) All right, governor; I'll make a note of it (*Writes in book, then closes it and puts it under his arm, pencil behind his ear, and marches out R. 2 E. whistling.*)

Uncle D. (*Stares at Sammy during above performance, and until he is out of sight.*) I wonder if that boy's mother would lend him to me for about fifteen minutes. I believe I'll ask her.

Enter Mrs. Livingston, L. 3 E., unperceived by Uncle D.

Mrs. L. (*Aside.*) Ah, this must be the rich bachelor uncle. Ahem!

Uncle D. (*Turns—bows to Mrs. L.*) Servant, ma'am. Ah—hello; (*aside, referring to note book*) white hat, Clarence. Well, I hope he'll have better luck than I had.

Mrs. L. (*Advancing.*) Am I right in supposing that this is Mr. Covington, the uncle of my young friend Clarence Covington?

Uncle D. Quite right, ma'am. And your name is Livingston, is it not?

Mrs. L. That is my name, sir.

Uncle D. (*Aside.*) I don't blame the boy a particle. I love her myself. (*To Mrs. L.*) You say that Clarence is a friend of yours?

Mrs. L. Oh, yes; a particular friend of mine, I assure you.

Uncle D. Then you are perhaps aware that he's in love with you?

Mrs. L. (*Astonished.*) In love with me, sir?

Uncle D. Yes. The fact is, he has it very badly. I never knew a worse case.

Mrs. L. You astonish me, sir. He has certainly never given me any reason to suppose that he cared for me except as a friend.

Uncle D. No; it appears that he has a difficulty with one of his lungs that has prevented him from telling you about it.

Mrs. L. Dear me; how dreadful.

Uncle D. Yes; it's very sad. But he'll recover in time, I think.

Mrs. L. Oh, I hope so.

Uncle D. Well, now, about this matrimonial business. (*Prepares to make entry in note book.*) What is your decision, ma'am?

Mrs. L. (*Agitated.*) Oh, I don't know what to say. It's so very sudden, you know.

Uncle D. Well, I suppose I might give you five minutes or so to make up your mind in. I've no desire to hurry you at all.

Mrs. L. I suppose I might as well decide at once. Clarence is a good, dear fellow—and—and—

Uncle D. (*Making entry.*) Ac-cepted.

Sammy. (*Heard without, R.*) Say, ma. That old covey with the eye-glass has been makin' love to cousin Lottie. I see him a doin' it.

Mrs. L. Sammy, you naughty boy, come here instantly.

Enter Sammy R. U. E.—stops on seeing Uncle D.

Mrs. L. Come to mamma, darling.

Sammy comes down—she embraces him.

Mrs. L. Do you know that you are going to have a new papa, pet?

Sammy. I thought you'd ketch on after awhile.

Mrs. L. (*Reprovingly.*) Sammy!

Uncle D. Beg pardon, ma'am, but does *that* (*pointing to Sammy*) go in, in this little arrangement of ours?

Mrs. L. Why, to be sure. Sammy is the sweetest child that ever lived. You can't help loving him when you become acquainted with him.

Uncle D. Y—yes, I—I presume so. In fact, I loved him at first sight.

Mrs. L. You will love him more when you come to know him well.

Uncle D. I sincerely hope so. By the way, I'd better go and tell Clarence of his good fortune, I think. Don't let anything happen to that boy, ma'am, unless you want to break the hearts of all of us.

Exit Uncle D., L. 2 E.

Sammy. Say, ma. I ain't got to have that feller for a pa, have I?

Mrs. L. Why, of course not, you silly boy. Your new papa will be Mr. Clarence Covington.

Sammy. Oh, cracky! I thought he was goin' to be my cousin.

Mrs. L. (*Severely.*) Nonsense, Sammy. You are a naughty boy to ever think of such a thing. Now run away and play, like a good boy.

Exit Sammy, whistling, L. 2 E.

Enter Lottie, R. 2 E.

Lottie. Oh, aunty; you never can think—
Mrs. L. Oh, Lottie; I'm sure you can't guess— } *Together.*

Mrs. L. Oh, I've such news for you.

Lottie. And so have I.

Mrs. L. So perfectly splendid.

Lottie. So perfectly absurd, you mean.

Mrs. L. Why, Lottie, what in the world are you talking about?

Lottie. Why, about that horrid old bachelor, Mr. Richard Covington, of course.

Mrs. L. Horrid! Why, I think he is simply delightful.

Lottie. Delightful, indeed. What do you think of his wanting me to marry him?

Mrs. L. Surely nobody could blame him for that, Lottie. I should want to marry you myself, if I were a man.

Lottie. Well, then, what do you think of his being sent to me on such an errand by his nephew, Mr. Clarence Covington?

Mrs. L. (*Embarrassed.*) Why—I—I suppose Clarence thought it would be nice if they could both be— that is, he wanted his uncle to share in his— oh, Lottie; can't you guess? Clarence has proposed to me That is, his uncle has done it for him.

Lottie. (*Astonished.*) Clarence Covington proposed to you?

Mrs. L. Yes, dear. I knew you would be surprised. Isn't it splendid?

Lottie. (*Agitated.*) Yes, it's per—per—per—fectly d—d—delightful. (*Sobbing, with handkerchief to her face.*)

Mrs. L. Why, Lottie, dear, what in the world are you crying for?

Lottie. (*From behind her handkerchief.*) Oh, I'm—I'm so g—g—glad. I ho—ho—hope you'll always be h—h—ha—happy. (*Turns away, R.*)

Enter Uncle D. and Clarence, L. 2 E.

Uncle D. (*To Clar.*) It's all right, my boy; I've settled everything.

Clar. How can I ever repay you, uncle? (*Crosses to Lottie*) My dear Lottie, you can't begin to think how happy I am. (*Tries to take her hand.*)

Lottie. (*Coldly drawing back.*) I congratulate you, Mr. Covington.

Clar. Why, Lottie, it seems to me you don't give a fellow a very warm reception. And you've been crying, too, as I live.

Uncle D. (*Gives a loud a-hem, and makes frantic efforts aside to attract Clarence's attention.*)

Clar. Eh? (*Looks around.*)

Uncle D. (*Motions with his head, and points with his thumb over his shoulder to Mrs. L., winks and frowns, and otherwise expresses in pantomime that Clar. is talking to the wrong woman.*)

Clar. (*Failing to comprehend Uncle Dick's gestures, turns again to Lottie.*) You're not offended with me because I didn't tell you myself, are you, Lottie? I couldn't do it, you know. I've always loved you from the very first; but somehow I never could tell you so.

Lottie. (*Coldly.*) It is rather late in the day for you to tell me so now, at any rate. You had better reserve your love speeches for your affianced wife.

Clar. (*Bewildered.*) And if you are not my affianced wife, then in the name of mischief who and where is she?

Uncle D. (*Who has been fuming away by himself.*) Why, you infernal blockhead, here she is. (*Pointing to Mrs. L.*)

(*During the foregoing Mrs. L. has been first astonished, then indignant; and now stands with back toward Clar., tapping the floor angrily with her foot, and fanning herself vigorously.*)

Clar. What—Mrs. Livingston? You don't mean to say I'm engaged to her, uncle?

Uncle D. Why, to be sure you are, you ungrateful rascal.

Enter Sammy, L. 2 E.

Sammy. (*To Clar.*) Hello, pa.

Uncle D. (*Places his hand on Sammy's head, and pushes him over to Clar.*) This is your property, too.

Clar. But Mrs. Livingston—I—you see—oh, confound it all, there's been an awful mistake made here, somehow.

Mrs. L. (*Haughtily.*) You can spare yourself all explanation, sir. I have had a few minutes for reflection since your uncle spoke to me, and I can assure you that I would not bestow my hand on such a man as you for any earthly consideration.

Clar. (*Joyfully.*) Oh, thank you—thank you. (*Seizes her hand and shakes it heartily.*) You've made me the happiest man in existence, Mrs. Livingston. You see how it is, Lottie. It's all a mistake. I never thought of loving any one but you.

Uncle D. Young man, I'm ashamed of you. You're the most fickle-minded young scapegrace I ever met. You told me it was the one with the white hat you loved.

Clar. (*Looking from one lady to the other.*) White hat—why, they must have been trading hats since I saw them last

Mrs. L. (*Angrily.*) Samuel Livingston, you little reprobate, I believe you had those hats changed on purpose.

Sammy. (*Blubbering, with his fists in his eyes.*) You don't s'pose I wanted that old duffer for a pa, do you?

Mrs. L. You just ought to, any way, to punish you for being so naughty.

Clar. Come, Lottie dear, you're not going to punish me for a simple misunderstanding, are you? I can't help loving you, and I don't want to help it; and I shall never, never be happy again until you tell me that you will be my wife.

Lottie. I think you have been sufficiently punished for your share in the misunderstanding, Clarence, and I don't want you to be unhappy, and—and—that is, I—

Clar. (*Interrupting.*) And you agree to become Mrs. Clarence Covington. Oh, you're the dearest girl in America, Lottie, and I'd love you more than ever if I was only a little larger. It's all right, uncle. Congratulate me.

Uncle D. Just wait a minute or two, young man, (*Takes out note book and turns to Mrs. Livingston.*) Madam, I have loved you devotedly and passionately for months. My love has grown from day to day, until it absorbs every fiber of my being. I live in the sunshine of your smiles, and am wretched and miserable when absent from your side. Will you be my wife?

Mrs. L. (*Promptly.*) I will, sir, if only to prove to that young man that I'm not pining at all for him.

Uncle D. Very well, then, that's settled. Now, young man, I'm ready to congratulate you. (*They shake hands.*)

Clar. And I return the compliment most heartily. You are a lucky man, uncle, and fully deserve your good fortune. By the way, Uncle Dick (*pushes Sammy over to him*) this is your property, too.

Sammy. (*To Uncle D.*) Hello, dad.

Uncle D. (*Sighing.*) Well, we all have to take the bitter with the sweet. I anticipate great pleasure in reconstructing this young man after a more approved model; and I trust that the events of this day will result in such happiness for us all that we shall never have reason to regret the occasion of "UNCLE DICK'S MISTAKE."

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